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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/11/2018  
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SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH MFA ON RECENT DETENTIONS OF MB  
MEMBERS

REF: CAIRO 448

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Stuart Jones  
Reasons: 1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (C) DCM raised the recent arrests of approximately 450-700 Muslim Brotherhood (MB) affiliated Egyptians with MFA Assistant Minister for American Affairs Hatem Saif el Nasser on March 11. During a courtesy call for visiting NEA PDAS Jeff Feltman, we told Nasser that the timing of the arrests, ahead of the local elections, will cloud international perceptions. The MB is loved neither by the USG nor the GOE, but the elections are constitutionally important in the lead-up to the 2011 presidential election and presidential succession. The Administration, Congress, human rights groups, and the media are all watching the conduct of the local council elections closely.

12. (C) Nasser said he would relay the message. He offered his personal opinion that he "could not imagine life with the MB in control," saying that "88 members in parliament have "given us enough problems already. They have such closed minds and they fill me with fear." That said, Nasser recognized that it is up to the Egyptian government to compete with the MB in the democratic arena and foster a fair and transparent process. However, the MB was "finding the cracks" by hiding under a veil of piety, and taking political advantage of economic pressures facing the average Egyptian.

13. (U) Bio note: Nasser was recently assigned to be the next Egyptian ambassador to Great Britain.  
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